



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PAC PRESENTS RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO 2023 AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT TO LOCAL COUNCILS

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday, 19th November 2025, engaged key stakeholders from Local Councils at the Parliamentary Conference Room, New Administrative Building to discuss resolutions arising from the Auditor General's Report for 2023 during the course of its oversight activities relating to the same.

Chairman of the PAC, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, who doubles as the Deputy Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament, noted that the Committee's oversight revealed several fiscal management challenges, but in the same vein the PAC had recovered over 2 Million Dollars in financial irregularities relating to the 2023 Auditor General's Report. He also said that 80% of audit issues were successfully resolved, and over two million dollars had been recovered during the period under review largely from withholding taxes and other statutory deductions.

Hon. Conteh highlighted persistent problems with the PETRA financial management system, which is widely used by Local Councils. He pointed out that the service provider managing the system is currently out of the country, posing significant hurdles to the smooth operations of councils in respect of revenue projections and mobilisation. He further emphasized that only two councils exceeded their projected own-source revenue projections and mobilisation. He sent a strong worded warning that in future, councils failing to meet revenue targets would risk non-allocation of government's resources.

The Chairman also expressed concern about the frequent transfer of council staff, noting that abrupt staff movement is undermining effective operations. He later encouraged all stakeholders to openly discuss the issues and propose workable solutions.

The Head of the PAC Secretariat, Augustine Sesay, read the following resolutions adopted during the Committee's deliberations relating to the 2023 Auditor General's Report as follows:

1. PETRA System Inefficiency:

PAC will engage the PFMRD, Ministry of Finance, Chief Administrators (CAs), Finance Officers (FOs), Chairpersons, and Mayors regarding the rollout of the PETRA system. The Committee raised concerns over the Ministry's continued payment for ten system users while only one or two officials have actual access.

2. Poor Revenue Generation:

Due to the low revenue performance of Councils, PAC will summon the Fiscal Decentralisation Division (FDD), CAs, FOs, Chairpersons, and Mayors to discuss a new policy: future allocations to Councils will be directly tied to the amount of revenue each Council generates.

3. Improving Revenue Mobilisation:

Councils were advised to:

Prepare line-by-line PowerPoint presentations showing projected and actual performance of every revenue stream (mining royalties, licences, business registration, timber, market dues, etc.)

Provide clear breakdowns of central government and donor funds received, and indicate how much was spent on administrative and devolved functions, aimed at ensuring real-time monitoring of performance.

4. Staff Stability:

PAC will ensure that Local Council staff remain in their assigned posts until all audit queries are fully addressed before any transfer could occur.

5. Arrears Recovery:

Councils must compile comprehensive lists of outstanding taxpayer arrears. PAC will write to each Council, and Councils must reference these letters when summoning defaulters. PAC will require taxpayers to settle their dues or risk garnishing of bank accounts in line with Sections 8 and 9 of the Finance Act 2022.

Director Lydia Kargbo from the Public Financial Management Reforms Division (PFMRD) reported that 19 councils currently use the PETRA system, outlining its functions and associated challenges.

The Deputy Auditor General, Morie Lansana highlighted persistent deficiencies, citing frequent server down-time.

Hon. Aaron Aruna Koroma, Deputy Leader of Opposition 2, also on behalf of PAC submitted that the system has not been functioning effectively, while stakeholders acknowledged that poor IT infrastructure further complicates its operation.

Director Kargbo disclosed that a new PFM Smart System is expected to be introduced and rollout in 2026 to address many of the shortcomings associated with the PETRA system.

The meeting further resolved that the PAC, Accountable Governance for Basic Service Delivery Project, and the PFMRD will collaborate to address equipment needs for the rollout of the new PFM Smart system. The Committee also extensively discussed challenges relating to own-source revenue and payments arrears owed to the local councils.

It was unanimously agreed that a follow-up engagement would be held to address all the outstanding issues ahead of the 2026 fiscal year.

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